

THE LAND OF THE NOONDAY SUN—MEXICO IN MID WINTER.

(From Arena for April.)

BY JUSTICE WALTER CLARK, LL. D.
(Continued from last week.)

The court system of Mexico is very similar to ours. Each State has its Justices of the Peace, its Superior or Circuit Courts, and its Supreme Court. Then the Federal government has its District Courts, its Circuit Courts, and its Supreme Courts; the latter is divided into three divisions, and meets as a whole only for the decision of certain important questions. The law is codified, the Code Napoleon, with some modifications, being adopted. As in France, the court renders decisions, but files no opinions. Hence there are no shelves filled with volumes of law reports as with us, and the decision of a case, more or less similar, by another court, or by the same court on a previous occasion, cannot be cited as a precedent. This is equally the rule in all countries having the Code Napoleon for the basis of its law, and has at least this advantage, that an erroneous or unjust decision is not perpetuated as a rule to be always thereafter observed.

All civil actions are tried by the judges without the intervention of a jury. In criminal cases, the right of trial by jury is guaranteed by the constitution. A jury consists of nine, and six must concur to find a verdict of guilty. If as many as eight jurors agree to a verdict the judge cannot set it aside. The constitution prescribes a mode in which its provisions can be suspended, and the guarantee of trial by jury has been suspended as to persons guilty of throwing trains off the track, burning railroad bridges, and shooting into cars. In these cases the offenses are tried by court martial and if found guilty are shot within twenty-four hours. The brigand element was prone to this offense as they felt they were being destroyed by means of the speedy communication by train and the rapid concentration of troops. The brigands have been broken up, and this offense is now almost unknown.

One great defect has been the want of education among the masses. But this is being remedied. Schools are established by law and are to be found everywhere. They have not only common schools and high schools, all secular, and maintained out of the public funds, but there is compulsory attendance. Not infrequently a policeman may be seen collecting a squad of truant children and marching them off to the schoolroom.

The signs over the stores rarely swing out across the sidewalk as with us, but the European mode of putting all signs flat against the wall is usually followed. This alone makes a marked difference in the appearance of the streets. Then, too, instead of the sign reading "John Smith & Co.," each store has, quite in Chinese fashion, a title, more or less fanciful, for example, "The Paradise," "The Garden of Eden," "Aladdin's Lamp," "The Fifth of May" (a national celebration), "The Sacred Heart of Jesus," and the like.

In speaking of the houses, it may be added that they, especially the residences, look very plain from the street, for they have on the lower floor usually only a door, strong and substantially built, on the street side, and if there are windows always heavy iron gratings to them. This originated doubtless in the precarious and turbulent times of yore, but it is kept up in part for the reason that by excluding the light the rooms are kept cooler. On the upper floors, before each apartment, is a narrow balcony, and on these the family, especially young ladies, sit in the cool of the evening to see the world passing along beneath them and to reward their friends with a smile. But the interior of these residences belie their exterior. They are invariably built around an open courtyard, and around this courtyard runs a porch with floors for each story. Thus each room has its door opening on the porch, and the courtyard with its fountain and its flowers which bloom the year round presents a scene of color and life. The houses are built of stone, or "adobe," i. e., sun dried brick; if the latter, usually stuccoed. The walls are always very thick, and the pitch of the rooms very high and the floors tiled. This and the customary absence of windows keep the rooms cool and pleasant in summer and warm in winter. This mode of building also gives the most complete privacy. Evidently these people understand building for their own climate. An American wooden house, with its numerous windows and lower ceiling, and opening outwards would be unpleasantly warm in the glare of the tropical sun and too cool when the sun had withdrawn, and (besides its publicity) deprive the family of their courtyard, its fountain and flowers.

The "adobe," or sun dried brick, are usually about fourteen inches wide by twenty inches long and four or five inches thick. It is a very cheap building material and a house is built very rapidly. When the owner's means per-

mit the "adobe" is stuccoed, otherwise not. The more substantial buildings, as well as the churches and public edifices, are usually constructed of stone.

The stores on the public squares usually frequently have "Patales." These are academies running the entire length of the block and are constructed by making the sidewalks four times the usual width (they are ordinarily very narrow) thus moving the front of the stores back, and the second story is built over the entire sidewalk, giving a wide walk protected from sun and rain and inviting custom for the stores in inclement weather. The streets are usually paved with cobble stone, though some improvement on this has been attempted in some places. In the City of Mexico there are some streets with asphalt pavements. The names of streets change with each block, or if the same name is retained, it is the first, second, or third of such a street according to the number of the block from the beginning.

The ordinary means of freight transport, exclusive of the new methods by railroad, is by "burros" (donkeys) and by carriages on men's backs. It is astonishing what loads can be carried by both. The load on a man's back is usually sustained by a band passing around the forehead. The working women usually carry their infant children on their backs. The loads on the burros are divided and placed one half on each side. Numbers of the animal singly, but more frequently in droves, can be seen at all times passing along with out bridles and carrying loads much larger than themselves, and men can often be seen carrying loads so large that only the man's feet can be seen, thus resembling an animated hayrick or corn shock. When railroad construction began the native laborers would take off their "z raps," or blankets, load them with the dirt, then giving a twist they would fasten an end of the blanket around their foreheads and trot off with enormous loads. When wheelbarrows were prescribed, they would load the burrows up and place the loaded burrows on their heads and carry them off to empty. When made to roll them, they would still put the empty burrows on their heads to bring back. But this stage of development is now past, and the incident merely shows that the use of the wheelbarrows, like many other things in our civilization, is not intuitive but acquired.

In all the cities and towns of any size they have street cars, electric lights, ice factories and other concomitants of modern civilization. These plants come from the United States and like the railroads are largely owned and operated by Americans. In respect to water works and sewerage the cities are as yet almost unprovided, with the result that with one of the healthiest climates in the world the cities on the great plateau of Mexico show a comparatively high death rate. This is especially true of the City of Mexico where the death rate is abnormally high. There is a system of sewerage and drainage has been under construction some years and will be completed very soon, which will doubtless change all this. The signs and advertisements of our leading sewing machines are often met with and also the agencies of our great life insurance companies, though necessarily, from what I have said, there is small demand for fire insurance.

The religion of the country remains nominally Roman Catholic, for "The Reform" (as it is called), which confiscated all the church property was economic and political and had no religious element in it, thus differing widely from Luther's in Germany and Knox's in Scotland, and in some particulars, though not in all, more nearly resembling the confiscation of church property by Henry VIII in England. The women of Mexico are, as a rule, still devout Catholics. The men are said, by those who know them best, to have as a rule no religion to amount to anything, though probably the majority of them still lift their hats whenever they happen to pass a church door, were it fifty times a day. There are very few Protestants, as yet, among the native population, though the different denominations are represented by able and devout missionaries, all of whom, that I met, seemed to be hopeful and satisfied with the progress they are making.

In Mexico, as in all countries dominated by the Spanish speaking race, Jesus is, as it was in ancient Judea, a not unusual name. I recall an incident I heard of a very sick man who in awakening from a troubled slumber was much terrified by finding on a chair in front of him a placard, "Call for Jesus." This happened to be the name of his nurse.

In appearance, the people of Spanish descent are white, and when dressed in American style, as most of them do, are not very different in appearance from Americans. Those of Indian or of Indian and white race mixed

"Wear the shadowed livery of burnished sun." They are a light yellow, and differ

widely in appearance from the sharp cheek bones and copper color of the Indians of our plains. The Aztecs, Zapotecs, and Tarascons of Mexico have a very remote kinship to the Cherokee, Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaws, Sioux, Utes, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, and other Indian tribes of this country. The young people of the wealthy classes are well educated, many of them being sent to Europe and this country. Many of the S. n. ritas are exceedingly sylph like and handsome, though with a tendency to grow stout as they grow old. The rhythmic tones of that "soft, bastard Latin which melts like kisses from the female mouth" are musical indeed when spoken by them, for their voices, like that of Annie Laurie, are usually "Low and sweet, like summer breezes sighing."

Slavery has never existed in Mexico under the Republic. Their laborers are said, by the Americans I met, to be faithful and efficient. On the haciendas, as the large farms are called, large numbers of laborers are employed and are called "peons." On the estate or hacienda of Jalisco twenty thousand peons, including their families, were formerly employed and the owner of this hacienda furnished an entire regiment of cavalry in the war of independence, but as is usually the case with great wealth, on the side opposite to popular rights. The peons are not slaves, nor attached to the soil, but their wages not being more than sufficient to support them and their families and having strong local attachments, they usually remain from generation to generation in the employ of the same hacienda. Wages of labor have always been very low in Mexico, the population being excess of the demand for labor and the opportunities for its employment, but the dollar not having been enhanced as with us, there has been no reduction in wages as with us, and hence no strikes in protest against such cuts. On the contrary, owing to the new enterprises opened up and the increasing demand for labor, there has been in certain sections and in certain employments a decided rise in wages. Still the laborer having been accustomed all his life to live very cheaply and his wants in so mild a climate being very few, wages are still much lower than with us. The fuel, food, and clothing required by our more vigorous climate could not be bought with the modest stipend of the Mexican day laborer.

Traveling is mostly done on the railroads, but when I had occasion to try the stage coaches I found them the same conveyances, and exactly as uncomfortable, as with us. I heard of this adventure, however: A traveler having bought a first class ticket found many of the people around him had bought second and third class tickets. As all occupied similar seats and had the same accommodations, he was puzzled to conceive where the difference came in, until the foot of a long, steep hill was reached, when the driver enlivened him by calling out (in Spanish), "Second class passengers, get out and walk; third class, get out and push; gentlemen (enore) first class passengers, please keep your seats." On the cars they also have three classes, but there is a distinction in the accommodations. The first class is like the first class compartment in England, which it is usually said there "is used only by fools, Americans and Dukks." The second class has good accommodations and is used generally by people of means. The third class cars have four benches running the whole length of the car and are used by those who do not feel able to pay second class fare. The rates of passenger and Pullman fare were fixed several years ago, at the average rate on our Western railroads. At that time the Mexican and American dollar were of the same value. Since then the Mexican dollar has remained at the same value, but the American dollar, by legislation designed for that end, has been doubled in value, requiring double the quantity of produce to buy it. The result, of course is that while passenger fare and Pullman charges on both sides of the Rio Grande remain nominally the same, in fact travelling on one side costs about double. The same is largely true of freight rates, the reduction in these rates in the United States from competition being more than made up by the enhancement in the standard of value.

Above Zacatecas is the hill or mountain La Bafa (the buffalo) so called from its shape, and on that height a battle was fought in 1871 resulting in a victory for Juarez. From his summit, as also from the car windows as we leave for the southward, is one of the finest views in the world. The flat topped houses, the domes steeples, and the church in the mountain side in which the city is built lie spread out before you, with mountains after mountain rising above you to the north and valley after valley revealed to the south. There is a horse car line from Zacatecas six miles down to Guadalupe into which you roll, the whole distance, by the force of gravity; and the mules find cause for gravity on their part in pulling you back again. These two towns and their surroundings in many respects seem as if a bit of Palestine. The church at Guadalupe is very old and possesses peculiar sanctity. One is struck, however, with the change time has made when he sees on each side of the high altar a large Mexican flag, falling in folds from ceiling to floor. The church is, like all others now, government property.

(Continued next week)

(OFFICIAL) NATIONAL ALLIANCE DEMANDS.

Adopted at Washington, D. C., February 6, 1896.

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence, as a basis for a Republican form of government that might be progressive and perpetual, states:

"That all men are created equal; that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the governed."

We hold, therefore, that to restore and preserve these rights under a Republican form of government, private monopolies of public necessities for speculative purposes, whether of the means of production, distribution or exchange, should be prohibited, and whenever any such public necessity or utility becomes a monopoly in private hands, the people of the municipality, state or union, as the case may be, shall appropriate the same by right of eminent domain, paying a just value therefor, and operate them for, and in the interest of, the whole people.

FINANCE.

We demand a national currency, safe, sound and flexible; issued by the general government only; a full legal tender for all debts and receivable for all dues, and an equitable and efficient means of distribution of this currency, directly to the people, at the minimum of expense and without the intervention of banking corporations and in sufficient volume to transact the business of the country on a cash basis.

(a) We demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the legal ratio of 16 to 1.

(b) We demand a graduated income tax.

(c) That our national legislation shall be so framed in the future as not to build up one industry at the expense of another.

(d) We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all National and State revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government economically and honestly administered.

(e) We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of savings of the people, and to facilitate exchange.

(f) We are unalterably opposed to the issue, by the United States, of interest bearing bonds, and demand the payment of all coin obligations of the United States, as provided by existing laws, in either gold or silver coin, at the option of the government and not at the option of the creditor.

TRANSPORTATION.

(a) The government shall purchase or construct and operate a sufficient mileage of railroads to effectually control all rates of transportation on a just and equitable basis.

(b) The telegraph and telephone, like the postoffice system, being a necessity for the transmission of intelligence, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

LAND.

We demand that no land shall be held by corporations for speculative purposes or by railroads in excess of their needs as carriers, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

SECTION OF UNITED STATES SENATORS.
We demand the election of United States Senators by a direct vote of the people. That each State shall be divided into two districts of nearly equal voting population, and that Senators from each shall be elected by the people of the district.

DISTRICT LEGISLATION.

Relying upon the good, common sense of the American people, and believing that a majority of them, when unfluenced by party prejudice, will vote right on all questions submitted to them on their merit; and, further, to effectually annihilate the pernicious lobby in legislation, we demand direct legislation by means of the initiative and referendum.

R. A. SOUTHWORTH
Sec'y Treas. N. F. A. and I. U.

What funny things these goldbugs are! It was the New York World, Pulitzer's paper, that claimed to have found the "popular loan," and exposed the Belmont-Rothschilds deal with the administration, and now it comes out with an editorial which is interpreted to mean an endorsement of Cleveland for a third term. Things generally seem to conspire together to prove that the average goldbug is a stinkbug.—Gazette, Hutchinson, Kansas.

There is more Calcutta in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors promised, and by constantly failing to cure with remedies, and pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and, therefore, requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. It cures one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials. Address: F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O.

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